



Criteria and Procedures for Addition of Data Items



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Overview

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The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (MDPHHS) receives funds in a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to operate a state-based Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) that is conducted on a calendar year basis.

As part of this cooperative agreement, CDC allows each state the opportunity to add questions to the BRFSS survey which can provide data to meet state-specified needs. In order to add state questions, certain procedures must be followed and resources provided to analyze the data. CDC financially supports a limited number of core sections and does not provide a full analysis of the data.

Timeframe and Submission Process

Using the procedures and criteria described within, all requests for additional data items must be submitted electronically to the state BRFSS Coordinator in July of the year preceding the upcoming year's BRFSS survey.

Requests for inclusion of additional data items are reviewed and acted on by the state BRFSS Working Group, the BRFSS Coordinator, and the BRFSS Director. Consultation may also occur with the contracted telephone surveyors and the Behavioral Sciences Branch of CDC.

Under normal circumstances, modules and state-added questions will be appended at the end of the questionnaire to avoid biasing any responses to core or optional module questions.

CDC approval is required to place any module or state-added question to the core. Core questions take precedence. No questions will be added which may adversely affect the response or refusal rates of the survey.



Additional Information

Question Appraisal System (QAS)

Each new question at the minimum must be tested using the Question Appraisal System that is available in the state BRFSS Coordinator's office. If the new questions are accepted, the BRFSS Coordinator will work with the requestor, CDC, and the contracted telephone surveyors on the finalization of question wording, placement, and order as well as cognitive and field-testing.

Cost of Questions Added

The cost of the questions added to the survey will be determined in part by CDC funding and in part by negotiations with the contracted telephone surveyors. As an estimate, programs developing proposals may consider a minimum \$1000 per question for optional or state-added module questions.

Reminder of Submission Process

Using the procedures and criteria described in this booklet, all requests for additional data items must be submitted electronically to the state BRFSS Coordinator by mid-summer prior to the upcoming calendar year to be considered for inclusion in the BRFSS survey. Discuss special surveys or requests with:

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3. Analysis Plan

(a) **Relevant Population**

What proportion of respondents will be asked the questions, i.e., numerator/denominator definitions. What is the feasibility of collecting an adequate sample size? Will the BRFSS sample size provide an adequate representation of your health concerns for data analysis?

(b) **Type of Additional Analysis**

Are the data part of your program's strategic plan? What type of data are needed for analysis? What type of analysis will be conducted and who will analyze the data? Include supporting graphs and tables, if doing so will assist in understanding the value of the requested proposal.

(c) **Use of Data**

How will the data be used by the program(s) or agency and who will benefit? How will the program change as a result of the new information gathered and analyzed? Will the data be used effectively?



Emergency, Critical Health, or Special Point-in-Time Issues

If a critical health issue or a statewide emergency develops for which the MDPHHS needs behavioral or attitudinal data, questions can be added to the BRFSS at any time during the survey year. Such requests for emergency or critical health issues questions must be reviewed by the BRFSS Working Group and approved by the state BRFSS Coordinator and Director. Additional costs will be incurred for these questions.

Special point-in-time surveys may also be considered if the request is for a larger number of questions or a specific target audience, and if funds are available. Requests or proposals for emergency or special point-in-time surveys must follow a format similar to the optional modules or state-added questions in order to be considered.



Criteria for Selecting State-Added Data Items

1. Proposed Questions

If the request is not for a CDC-approved module, a draft of the proposed questions must be included. This draft should also include instructions and identification of any interviewer skip patterns.

2. Background

Describe the estimated prevalence of the behavior or risk factor to be measured based upon other national surveys, state surveys, or best available evidence. *(Due to sample size issues, BRFSS is not recommended as the system for gathering data about behaviors with less than 5% prevalence in the general adult population.)*

3. Rationale or Reason for the Request

(a) **Purpose and Goals of Asking the Questions**

Include a statement of the questions' relationship to the Healthy People 2010 Objectives and/or other priority health issues and appropriate strategic plans.

(b) **Relevance to Personal Risk Behaviors**

What are the primary groups at risk? Are the questions necessary to provide baseline data or to track progress toward achievement of strategic program goals?

(c) **Other Sources**

What other sources have been considered for obtaining the data? What are the reasons for choosing BRFSS as the means for data collection?

(d) **Prior Use of the Questions**

What is the history of the questions? Have they been used in other states or surveys? Have they been field-tested or is the expected validity known? Are they suitable for telephone interviews?

(e) **Relevance to Other BRFSS Questions**

What other topic areas on the questionnaire are relevant to your issue?

Criteria for Selecting State-Added Data Items continued...

(f) **Need for Survey**

How frequently would the questions need to be asked (every year, every other year, every five years, etc.)? Include a justification for this frequency. This should be based primarily on expectations for change in the prevalence and consistent with a long-range surveillance plan.

(g) **Time and Resources**

How much length (in terms of the number of questions, the time to ask them, and to answer them) will the questions add to the survey?

(h) **Amount and Constraints of Funds for the Request**

When will the requesting program funds need to be spent? Consider your funding cycle to the BRFSS survey cycle which runs on a calendar year basis.

3. Analysis Plan

(a) **Relevant Population**

What proportion of respondents will be asked the questions, i.e., numerator/denominator definitions? What is the relevant population, i.e., 45 years and older, child-bearing age, etc?

(b) **Type of Additional Analysis**

What type of analysis will the requesting program conduct and what type of data are needed for that analysis? Who will analyze the data? Are the data part of your program's data plan? Include supporting graphs and tables if doing so will assist in understanding the value of the requested data.

(c) **Use of Data**

How will the data be used by the programs or agency and who will benefit? How will you change your program as a result of the new information gathered and analyzed?



Criteria for Selecting Optional Modules

1. Proposed Optional Module

Provide a copy of the module.

2. Rationale or Reason for the Request

(a) **Purpose and Goals of Asking the Module Questions**

Include a statement of the module's relationship to the Healthy People 2010 Objectives or objectives of another state plan.

(b) **Relevance to Risk Behaviors or a Particular Program**

Is the module or set of questions necessary to track progress toward achievement of program goals? Is the module necessary for collecting baseline data for development of a new program or assessment of a health behavior? Consider if there is a more appropriate resource for collecting the data.

(c) **Prior Use of the Questions or Module**

Identify which questions have been asked in other years and indicate the years in which this occurred.

(d) **Need for Survey**

How frequently would the questions need to be asked (every year, every other year, every five years, etc.)? Provide a written justification for this frequency based primarily on expectations for change in the prevalence and consistent with a long-range surveillance plan.

(e) **Time and Resources**

How much length, in terms of number of questions and time to ask them, will the questions add to the survey? Consider the number of minutes needed to ask respondents the questions on the telephone and their response time and report it.

(f) **Amount and Constraints of Funds for the Request**

When will the requesting program funds need to be spent? Consider your funding cycle versus the BRFSS survey cycle. Surveillance is conducted on a calendar year basis.